REMARKS

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with the foregoing, claim 4, 12, and 15 have been amended, and claims 18-22 have been canceled. No new matter is submitted.

Claims 4-6, 9 and 12-17 are pending and under consideration.

REJECTION UNDER 35 USC 112

The Office Action indicates that there is insufficient support in the specification for the claimed making of only a second slope, of first and second slopes, as a diffusible surface.

Applicants respectfully disagree and point the Examiner to page 10, line 7, to page 11, line 3, which particularly explains that M2 slopes (claimed second slopes) are diffusible and M1 slopes (claimed first slopes) are not diffusible.

Further, contrast the differences between the embodiment of FIG. 3 with the embodiments of FIGS. 6 and 7. FIG. 3 clearly illustrates that in this embodiment the diffusion surface is on the M2 slope surface. The specification on page 10, lines 17-20, further clarifies that such selective roughening of a surface of the M2 surface can be performed by a conventional sandblasting technique.

Regardless, to clarify the claims, the above independent claims 4, 12, and 15 have been amended to clarify that the first slopes are not-diffusible (see FIG. 3) and that light is diffused by a surface of the second slopes after light has entered the light control element through the non-diffused first slopes.

Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

REJECTION UNDER 35 USC 103

Claims 4-6, 9, and 12-17 stand rejected under 35 USC 103 as being obvious over Watai, Japanese Patent No. 6-2500182. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that the Office Action interpretation of the present specification is in error. The Office Action states "[r]egarding to the feature that the only second slope or a portion of the repeated projections is a diffusible surface as claimed, such feature is not critical to the invention as admitted by the applicant in the present specification." The Office Action then cites pages 12-13 and FIGS. 6-8 of the present specification.

However, it is respectfully submitted that the reliance on pages 12-13 and FIGS. 6-8 cannot be used to interpret a claimed features as not being critical.

As stated on page 12 of the specification, "[i]n the foregoing embodiment [of FIG. 3], the exiting-surface slopes M2 of the prism sheet 12 are roughened. But this invention should by no means be limited to this." The specification then proceeds to describe alternate embodiments of FIGS. 6-8.

Accordingly, applicants have claimed the embodiment of FIG. 3, which clearly sets forth an embodiment with only one diffused slope surface and diffusion of light being performed after light has entered the light control element from an alternate non-diffused slope surface.

Thus, the previously claimed only second slope being roughened cannot be considered non-critical. This feature is particularly directed toward the embodiment of FIG. 3, where light is allowed to radiate within the light control element through a non-diffused first slope and then diffused while within the light control element by the second slope surface, again while in the light control element.

Conversely from this claimed arrangement shown in FIG. 3, the particular purpose of the diffusing elements of Watai is to diffuse light as it exits the prism sheet. The one illustration of FIG. 2 of Watai that shows only one slope being roughened is again purposely for only diffusing light upon exit from the prism to avoid the showing of stripes.

To further understand the difference, the inventors have found that if diffusion occurs at the first slopes (M1 of FIG. 3), then some light will be directed to useless directions. To the contrary, diffusion occurring at the second slopes (M2 of FIG. 3) while within the light control element produces substantially lower light loss or misdirection as most of the diffused light (by the inner-reflection/diffusion) is directed in the desired direction.

Regarding the obviousness of modifying the prior art (i.e., the background of the present application), the Office Action on page 6 states that "[t]hus it would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the optical device having a means in the form of a prismatic configuration formed on the entrance surface of a light control plate as provided by the prior art by making at least one slope or side which includes the (second) exist slope of each prism of the prismatic configuration as a roughed surface as suggested by Watai.

Thus, the Office Action rejection rationale is based upon an obviousness of implementing the diffusing teaching of Watai in combination with a known configuration of the prior art, based on the teaching of Watai.

However, Watai fails to disclose or suggest the claimed diffusing of incident light that is already present in the light control element, and light which entered the light control element through a non-diffused first slope to be incident on a diffused second slope again within the light control element.

As noted above, Watai would only disclose roughening the exiting surface of the prism sheet, or if flipped up-side-down as suggested in the Office Action, Watai would only disclose or suggest roughening the incidence surface of the light control element.

Watai does not disclose or suggest letting the light enter the light control element through a non-diffused slope and then diffusing that light while within the light control element.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the pending claims are patentably distinguishable over at least the disclosure and teaching of Watai.

Claims 4-6, 9, and 12-17 stand rejected under 35 USC §103 as being obvious over the background of the present application and Inoue, U.S. Patent No. 5,506,924. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Based on the above, it is respectfully submitted that disclosure of the present application, and the corresponding embodiment covered by the claims, have been misinterpreted. The Office Action has considered the claimed selection of only one diffusible surface as being non-critical, while applicants above pointed out that this is a particular embodiment whose arrangement is critical to the invention of the same.

Inoue, like Watai above, similarly fails to disclose the claimed diffusing of light by a diffused slope of the light control element while light is traversing within the light control element, i.e., after light entered the light control element through a non-diffused slope of the light control element.

Further, similar to above, Inoue similarly fails to disclose or suggest the implementation of the diffusing of slight by the inner surface of the second slope after light enters a prism sheet through non-diffused slope.

Inoue would only disclose either lastly diffusing light upon exit from the prism sheet or firstly diffusing light upon entry to the prism sheet. Inoue does not disclose or suggest diffusing light while within the prism sheet after entering a non-diffusing slope.

Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

STAAS & HALSEY LLP

Date: 12/7/06

By: _____
Stephen T. Boughner
Registration No. 45,317

1201 New York Avenue, NW, 7th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20005
Telephone: (202) 434-1500
Facsimile: (202) 434-1501